Martand Sun Temple, Kashmir

Ref: ChatGpt

1. Location, Address & Contact

Location:
Martand Sun Temple is located at **Mattan (also called Martand), near Anantnag**, in the Kashmir Valley, Jammu & Kashmir, India.

Address:
Martand Sun Temple Ruins,
Mattan, Anantnag District,
Jammu & Kashmir – 192125, India

Phone:
There is **no direct temple office/contact number**, as it is a **protected archaeological monument** under the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**.

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2. How to Reach

- **By Air:**
  Nearest airport: **Srinagar International Airport** (approx. 60 km)
- **By Rail:**
  Nearest railway station: **Anantnag Railway Station** (approx. 9 km)
- **By Road:**
  - Well connected by road from **Srinagar (60 km)**
  - Regular taxis and buses available to **Mattan**
  - From Mattan, the temple is a short drive or walk uphill

3. Greatness & Spiritual Significance

- Dedicated to **Surya (Sun God)**, known here as **Martand**
- One of the **oldest and grandest Sun temples in India**
- A rare example of **ancient Kashmiri temple architecture**
- Symbolizes **solar worship**, prosperity, and cosmic energy
- The temple stands as a testimony to the **glorious Hindu heritage of Kashmir**

4. Legends & History

- Built by **King Lalitaditya Muktapida** of the **Karkota dynasty** in the **8th century CE**
- The name **"Martand"** comes from Sanskrit, meaning **Sun God (one of the Adityas)**
- According to mythology, Martand is associated with **Surya born from Aditi**
- The temple was **destroyed in the 14th–15th century** during invasions (often attributed to Sultan Sikandar)

Despite destruction, the ruins still reflect its past grandeur.

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5. Architecture of the Temple

- Built in **Kashmiri-Gandhara architectural style**
- Constructed using **limestone**
- Features a **rectangular courtyard** with **84 smaller shrines** surrounding the main sanctum
- The main shrine has:
  - A **massive colonnaded entrance**
  - Intricate carvings blending **Indian, Greek, and Roman influences**
- Located on a **plateau**, offering panoramic views of the Kashmir Valley

The temple is considered a **masterpiece of ancient Indian architecture**.

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6. Main Deity

- **Surya (Sun God)** – worshipped as **Martand**

7. Sub-Deities

Originally, the temple complex is believed to have housed:

- **Various forms of Surya**
- Possibly **Vaishnavite and Shaivite deities**
- The 84 shrines may have been dedicated to **different gods and attendants**

(However, idols are no longer present today.)

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8. Daily Rituals & Poojas

- **No regular poojas or rituals are performed now**
- The temple is **non-functional as a place of worship**
- Maintained purely as a **historical monument by ASI**

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9. Special Poojas & Charges

- **Not applicable**
- Visitors may offer **personal prayers silently**, but no official rituals exist

10. Festivals

- No official festivals conducted at the site
- Devotees sometimes visit during:
  - **Ratha Saptami (Sun worship festival)**
  - **Makara Sankranti**

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11. Facilities for Devotees

Since it is an archaeological site:

- Basic visitor facilities available:
  - Parking area
  - Pathways for walking
- **No accommodation or temple lodging**
- No prasad counters or pooja services

12. Donation Information

- No temple trust or donation system
- Entry is managed by **ASI**

Entry Fee (approx.):

- Indian citizens: ₹25
- Foreign tourists: ₹300
  (Subject to change)

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13. Nearby Temples

1. **Mattan Nag Temple (Nagbal Temple)** – very famous and active temple nearby
2. **Shri Amarnath Cave Temple** (seasonal pilgrimage)
3. **Avantipur Temples (Avantiswami & Avantiswara)**
4. **Shankaracharya Temple (Srinagar)**
5. **Kheer Bhawani Temple (Tulmul)**

14. Other Tourist Attractions Nearby

- **Pahalgam –** scenic hill station (approx. 45 km)
- **Betaab Valley & Aru Valley**
- **Verinag Spring**
- **Achabal Garden (Mughal Garden)**
- **Dal Lake (Srinagar)**
- **Gulmarg** (farther but popular)

15. Nearby Budget Hotels

In Anantnag / Mattan:

- Hotel Himalaya
- Hotel Saffron
- Hotel Lee Heritage

In Pahalgam (more options):

- Hotel Mount View
- Hotel Heevan
- Hotel Pine Spring (mid-range)

16. Important Visitor Information

- Best time to visit: **April to October**
- Winters can be very cold with snow
- Carry water and basic necessities
- Respect the site as a **heritage monument**
- Photography is allowed

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17. Unique Features

- One of the **largest temple complexes** in Kashmir
- Blend of **Hindu, Gandharan, and classical architectural styles**
- A **symbol of lost grandeur**, yet spiritually powerful
- Offers **breathtaking valley views**

Conclusion

Though now in ruins, the **Martand Sun Temple** remains a **magnificent symbol of ancient Indian spirituality and architectural brilliance**. It reflects the **rich cultural and religious heritage of Kashmir**, drawing historians, devotees, and tourists alike.

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Ref: Google Gemini

Martand Sun Temple

The Martand Sun Temple is one of India's most significant archaeological sites, representing the zenith of Kashmiri temple architecture. Below is the detailed information for your research and records.

Location and Access

- **Location:** Keharbal, near Anantnag, Jammu & Kashmir (approx. 60 km from Srinagar).
- **Address:** Martand Sun Temple, Anantnag-Pahalgam Road, Keharbal, Jammu and Kashmir 192125.
- **Phone:** No direct landline (Protected by the Archaeological Survey of India - ASI).
- **How to Get There:**

    - **Air:** Nearest airport is Srinagar (SXR), about 65 km away.
    - **Rail:** Anantnag Railway Station is roughly 10 km from the site.
    - **Road:** Easily accessible by taxi or local bus from Anantnag or Srinagar. It is often a stop on the way to Pahalgam.

Greatness and History

- **Greatness:** It is considered the finest example of the Kashmiri style of architecture, blending local traditions with Gandharan, Greek, and Roman influences. It is often compared to the Sun Temple at Konark and Modhera for its historical importance.
- **History:** The foundation was likely laid by King Ranaditya in the 5th century CE, but the grand structure seen today was built by **King Lalitaditya Muktapida** of the Karkota Dynasty in the 8th century CE.
- **Legends:** It is believed the temple was built to honor "Martand" (the Sun God). Local legends also connect the site to the Pandavas (often called the "Pandav Lari").

Architecture and Deities

- **Architecture:** The temple is built from solid limestone and features a large central shrine surrounded by a courtyard with a colonnade of 84 fluted pillars. The design includes unique trefoil-headed arches and triangular pediments.
- **Primary Deity: Surya** (the Sun God).
- **Sub-Deities:** Carvings on the walls depict Vishnu, the river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna, and various Vedic deities.
- **Condition:** The temple was largely destroyed in the 15th century under the orders of Sultan Sikandar Butshikan. It is currently a ruin under ASI protection.

Rituals, Festivals, and Charges

- **Daily Rituals:** As it is a **protected monument/archaeological site** and not an active temple, there are no daily poojas, rituals, or official sub-deities maintained by priests.
- **Charges:** There are no charges for poojas. Entry is usually free or requires a nominal ASI monument fee (approx. ₹25 for Indians).
- **Special Rituals:** Occasionally, small groups of devotees perform symbolic prayers on significant days like Magh Saptami, but these are informal.
- **Festivals:** No official festivals are celebrated on-site due to its status as a ruin, though it remains a site of high spiritual reverence.

Facilities and Accommodations

- **Facilities:** ASI provides basic amenities like drinking water, toilets, benches, and manicured lawns. There are no "devotee" facilities like prasadam or cloakrooms.
- **Donations:** As a government-protected monument, there is no temple trust for religious donations. Funding is managed by the ASI.
- **Accommodation:** No accommodation at the temple site.
- **Nearby Budget Hotels:**
    - **Jaan Hotel and Restaurant** (Anantnag)

    - **Valley Guest House** (Anantnag)
    - **Hotel Bliss** (Anantnag)

Nearby Attractions

- **Religious Sites:** * **Mattan Temple:** An active temple 3 km away, dedicated to the Sun God, where traditional rituals and "Shradh" ceremonies are performed.
    - **Bumzu Caves:** Ancient cave temples nearby.
    - **Amarnath Yatra Base:** Nearby Pahalgam serves as the starting point.
- **Tourist Spots:** * **Pahalgam:** A major hill station (approx. 40 km).
    - **Achabal Gardens:** Historic Mughal gardens (approx. 10 km).
    - **Verinag Spring:** The source of the Jhelum River.

It is worth noting that the site's "84 pillars" are symbolically significant in Hindu cosmology, representing the 84 lakh cycles of life or the 12 months and 7 days of the week.

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More info:

The Martand Sun Temple is a masterclass in ancient engineering and symbolic storytelling. Here is a deeper look into its historical trajectory and its unique architectural DNA.

History and Legends

1. The Karkota Dynasty & King Lalitaditya

While the site may have held a smaller structure as early as the 5th century, the magnificent ruins seen today are the work of **King Lalitaditya Muktapida** (reigned c. 724–760 CE). Lalitaditya was a prolific conqueror whose empire stretched from the Caspian Sea to the banks of the Ganges. Martand was built to reflect his imperial power, serving as a political and spiritual statement of his "Suryavanshi" (descendant of the Sun) lineage.

2. The Legend of the "Dead Egg" (Martand)

The name "Martand" is derived from the Sanskrit words *Mrit* (dead) and *Anda* (egg). In Vedic mythology, Aditi (the mother of the gods) gave birth to eight sons. The eighth son was born as a lifeless, misshapen egg. He was cast away but later transformed into the vibrant Sun. The temple was built on this spot to honor the Sun as the source of all life and the "dispeller of darkness."

3. The Destruction

The temple remained a center of worship for over 600 years. Its decline began in the early 15th century during the reign of **Sultan Sikandar Butshikan**. Historical accounts suggest the structure was so massive and well-built that it took nearly a year of effort to dismantle

and damage the temple using hammers, fire, and even diverting water to undermine the foundation.

Architecture: The "Kashmiri Style"

The architecture of Martand is globally unique because it represents a "cultural crossroads," blending local Himalayan aesthetics with influences from the Silk Road.

1. The Layout: The Celestial Courtyard

- **The Peristyle:** The temple is enclosed by a massive rectangular courtyard (220 feet by 142 feet). It is lined with **84 small shrines** (miniature cells) built into the walls. The number 84 is sacred in Hinduism, representing the 84,000 leagues of the sun's orbit or the 84 lakh cycles of rebirth.
- **The Colonades:** The courtyard features fluted pillars with Greek-style capitals (Ionic/Doric influence), which is rare in mainland Indian temples.

2. The Central Shrine

The main temple is divided into three distinct parts:

- **Ardhamandapa (Entrance):** A highly decorated porch.
- **Antarala (Vestibule):** The middle chamber.
- **Garbhagriha (Sanctum Sanctorum):** The innermost chamber where the deity resided. This part was once topped by a massive pyramidal stone roof, a hallmark of Kashmiri architecture, though it has since collapsed.

3. Artistic Elements

- **Trefoil Arches:** The temple prominently features three-lobed arches (trefoil), which became a signature of Kashmiri design.
- **Pediments:** Above the arches are triangular pediments, reminiscent of classical Greek temples, showing the influence of the nearby Gandhara civilization.
- **Sculptural Reliefs:** Despite the damage, you can still see intricate carvings of:
    - **Surya** riding his chariot pulled by seven horses.
    - **Ganga and Yamuna** flanking the entrance to the sanctum.
    - **Lord Vishnu** in various incarnations, including a rare 12-headed form representing the 12 months of the year.

4. Strategic Positioning

The temple was built on a high plateau (the Karewa of Matan), specifically designed to provide a panoramic view of the entire Kashmir Valley. The orientation ensured that the first rays of the rising sun would enter the temple and illuminate the primary deity in the sanctum.

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Ref: Wikipedia

Central shrine Sun Temple, Martand, Jammu and Kashmir, India

The Martand Sun Temple is a Hindu temple located in Mattan, in the Anantnag district of the Kashmir Valley of Jammu and Kashmir, India. It dates back to the eighth century CE and was dedicated to Surya, the solar deity in Hinduism; Surya is also known by the Sanskrit-language synonym *Martand* (मार्तण्ड, *Mārtaṇḍa*). The temple was destroyed by Sikandar Shah Miri.

History

Establishment

According to Kalhana, the Martand Sun Temple was commissioned by Lalitaditya Muktapida in the eighth century CE.

Destruction

According to Jonaraja (fl. 1430) as well as Hasan Ali, the temple was destroyed by Sikandar Shah Miri (1389-1413) in a zeal to Islamise society under the advice of Sufi preacher Mir Muhammad Hamadani;[a] Jonaraja pinned the blame on his chief-counsel Suhabhatta, a Brahman neo-convert who was held to have manifested a reign of intense persecution for the local Hindus, whereas Ali particularly affirmed Sikandar's convictions in these aspects.[1][2][3]

Scholars caution against accepting these sources at face value — Jonaraja was appointed by Sikandar's son, who sought to bring back the Brahminical elite into the royal fold, while later Muslim chroniclers had their motives to fit the past into an idealist tale of orthodox

Islamic morality. According to Chitralekha Zutshi and Richard G. Salomon, Sikandar's policies were guided by realpolitik[4] and, like with the previous Hindu rulers, an attempt to secure political legitimacy by asserting state power over Brahmans and gaining access to wealth controlled by Brahminical institutions.[5] J. L. Bhan notes a stone sculpture—a four-armed Brahma, sculpted by the son of a Buddhist *Sanghapati* and dedicated to Sikandar—to challenge simplistic notions of religious persecution.[6] Slaje disagrees about the absence of religious motivations but notes the aversion of Brahmin chroniclers to be, largely, the result of resistance to the gradual disintegration of caste-hierarchy under Muslim influence.[7]

Degradation

The ruins and the remnants of the structure suffered further damage from several earthquakes.[8]

Architecture

The Martand temple was built on top of a plateau from where one can view the whole of the Kashmir Valley. From the ruins and related archaeological findings, it can be said that it was an excellent specimen of Kashmiri architecture, which had blended the Gandharan, Gupta, Chinese and possibly Syrian-Byzantine forms of architecture.[9][10]

The temple has a colonnaded courtyard, with its primary shrine in its center and surrounded by 84 smaller shrines, stretching 220 feet long and 142 feet broad in total and incorporating a smaller temple that was previously built.[11] The temple turns out to be the largest example of a peristyle in Kashmir and is complex due to its various chambers that are proportional in size and aligned with the overall perimeter of the temple. In Hindu temple architecture, the primary entrance to the temple is situated on the western side of the quadrangle and is the same width as the temple itself, creating grandeur. The entrance is highly reflective of the temple as a whole due to its elaborate decoration and allusion to the deities worshiped inside. The primary shrine is located in a centralised structure (the temple proper) that is thought to have had a pyramidal top - a common feature of the temples in Kashmir. Various wall carvings in the antechamber of the temple proper depict other gods, such as Vishnu, and river goddesses, such as Ganga and Yamuna, in addition to the sun-god Surya.

Conservation

The Archaeological Survey of India has declared the Martand Sun Temple as a site of national importance in Jammu and Kashmir.[13] The temple appears in the list of centrally protected monuments as *Kartanda (Sun Temple)*.[

Restoration

In March 2024, the Jammu and Kashmir government initiated efforts to restore the temple.[15]

In popular culture

- 1970: The Hindi film *Man Ki Aankhen* starring Dharmendra and Waheeda Rahman has Martand Temple as background for the Rafi-Lata song *Chala Bhi Aa Aaja Rasiya*.[16]
- 1975: The Hindi film *Aandhi* starring Sanjeev Kumar and Suchitra Sen has Martand Temple as background for the Kishore-Lata song "Tere Bina Zindagi Se Koi Shikwa Nahiin".[17]
- 2014: The temple was selected as the background for the song "Bismil", in the Hindi film *Haider*, modelled on Hamlet in the backdrop of the Kashmir conflict. Certain Kashmiri Pandits claimed that the site was depicted as a "den of evil"—hurting their sentiments in the process—and sought a ban.

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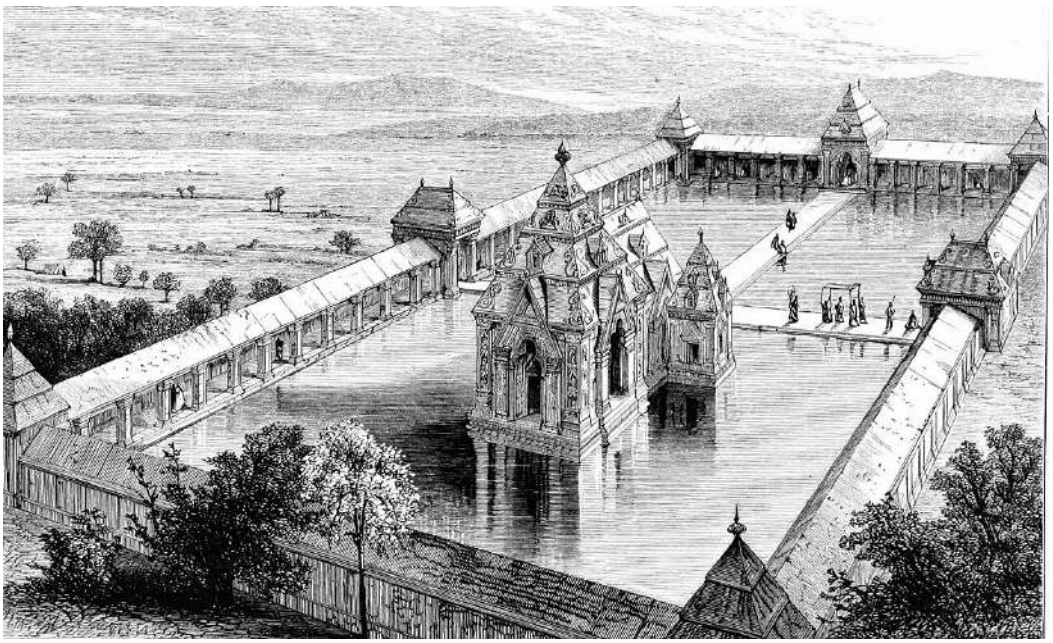
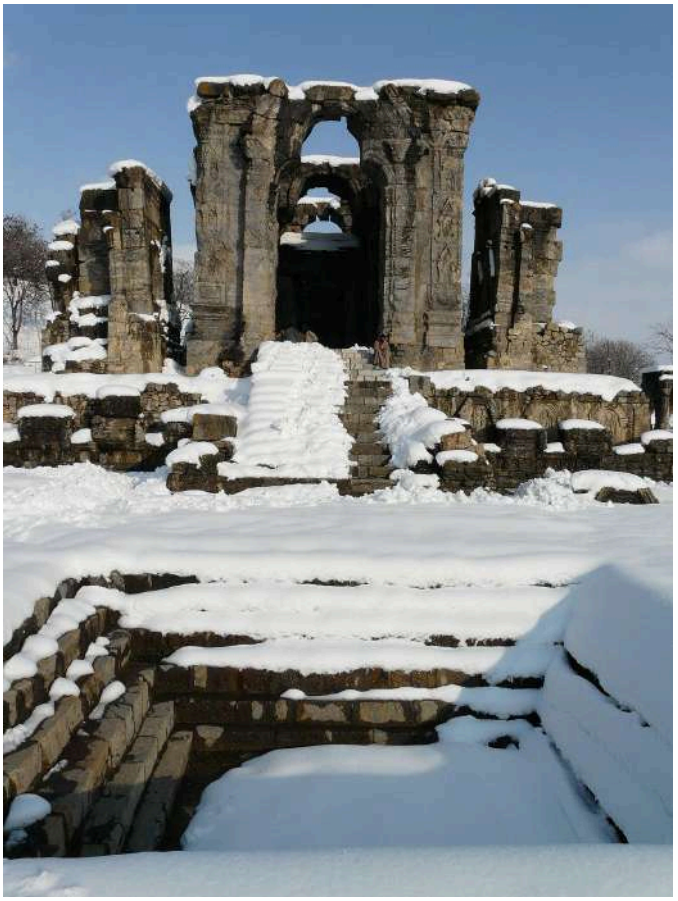
Photos

Ruins in 1870



Restored impression by J. Duguid (1870–73)



Ruins in winter of 2012

Inscriptions within the temple ruins

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Videos

Martand Sun Temple, Anantanag (0.49 min):
https://youtu.be/xMUcMsAKzto?si=HsBXeJD8BKeFto_t

Ancient Martand Sun Temple..FaceBoook (2.4 min):
https://www.facebook.com/share/v/18iAERTK9Q/

I - day in 2024 in Martand Sun Temple (2.3 min):
https://youtu.be/fo-FQacHJqA?si=MAwtSKdLaf8tkQX9

Martand Sun Temple (9 min):
https://youtu.be/M8z8RSrc2Z4?si=NIxf-Wv97ITD-uRD

Historic Sun Temple to be restored (2.4 min);
https://youtu.be/PCkqtUNSo7Q?si=-5pQLt6otEk--NEh

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About the Author

Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar is a Mechanical Engineer with specialization in Cryogenics. He obtained his B. E. In Mechanical Engineering from Karnataka Regional Engg College, (Now NITK), Surathkal, India and M.Sc. in Cryogenics from the University of Southampton, U.K., and Ph.D. from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore.

He has worked in prestigious organizations such as BARC, Bombay and Centre for Advanced Technology (CAT), Indore,as Head of Cryogenics Dept and contributed to the design of cryogenic systems, including the Thermovac chamber for ISRO, Bangalore.

He was also a visiting fellow at Superconducting Super Collider Project, at Texas, USA.

He has also served as Professor, Head of Department, and Principal in reputed engineering institutions.

Dr. Thirumaleshwar has authored a large number of FREE ebooks on Engineering subjects such as Thermodynamics, Heat Transfer, and Cryogenic Engineering, which are useful for students and teachers.

Driven by a deep interest in India's spiritual heritage, he has also authored many FREE ebooks on Temples, Saints, Gurus, and Vedic topics, with the aim of preserving and spreading this knowledge to future generations.

All his ebooks are available for free download at Archive.org.

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Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar
April 18, 2026

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